

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 9-21, 23, 25, 27-31, 33-46, 49-56, 59-71, 73, 75, 77-81, and 83-86 were pending in the present application. In the above amendments, claims 1-13, 22, 24-38, 47, 48, 51-63, 72, and 74-86 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, claim 38 is amended. Therefore, after entry of the above amendments, claims 14-21, 23, 38-46, 49, 50, 64-71 and 73 are now pending in this application for reconsideration. Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, which prompt and favorable action is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 51 and 64 were objected to due to minor informalities. Specifically, claims 51 and 64 recite the term “comprising” which should read “the method comprising.” Claims 1-5, 9-13, 51-55 and 59-63 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,567,462 to Brunner *et al.* (Brunner) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,272,174 to Murphy (Murphy). Claims 25, 27-31, 33, 37, 75, 77-81, 83 and 86 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,414,985 to Furukawa *et al.* (Furukawa) in view of Murphy. Claims 6 and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brunner in view of Murphy and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,909,704 to Sakoda (Sakoda). Claims 34-36, 84 and 85 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Furukawa and Murphy and further in view of Brunner. The Examiner further indicated that claims 38-40 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner allowed claims 14-21, 23, 41-46, 49, 50, 64-71 and 73.

All rejected claims are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thereby rendering moot the rejections of those claims. Additionally, claim 38 is amended to include all of the limitations

of the base claim and any intervening claim as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due, but if it is determined that additional fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any fee(s) or any underpayment of fee(s) or credit any overpayment(s) to Deposit Account No. 17-0026. If necessary, Applicants request, under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a) to extend the period for filing a reply in the above-identified application and to charge the fees for a large entity under 37 CFR 1.17(a).

Respectfully submitted,

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